



The South India CHURCHMAN



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The Magazine of the Church of South India

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JUNE 1984

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25 Years Ago

God the Holy Spirit : We may express this same in another way by reminding ourselves that the essence distinctive and constitutive fact of the Church is God the Holy Spirit, the Life giver. It is worthy of note that on many sides we are being called to a renewed realism of the truth which we profess in the Creed of our belief in the Holy Spirit. The considerable effectiveness of the various Pentecostal bodies is a warning to us that we have neglected to teach adequately the truth about God the Holy Spirit and, no less important, that too much of the record of our lives betrays the fact that we do not really believe that every Christian has received the Holy Spirit. This is true of our own individual lives. It is still more obviously true of our corporate life in our congregations and diocese or a Church.

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Communal Harmony



Situation in the Punjab has gone out of control. With a shocking impunity, the extremists have been killing innocent people daily. The most surprising part of the whole tragedy is that the political party which has initiated the movement is still hob-nobbing with the inciters of extremist violence profaning the sanctity of the Golden Temple. This has become a baffling and frustrating problem both for the politicians and the religious leaders. Friction and rivalry among diverse religious movements and political parties has become the leitmotif of today's India's politico-religious landscape. Any further dilly-dallying by the political party over their demands would only provide much encouragement to the murderers now on the rampage. It is strange that anti-national elements in Kashmir valley should have surfaced almost at a time when the murderous Punjab secessionists plunged their State into communal strife.

The continuing tragedy of the Punjab exposes the poverty of our national politics. If all the national parties join hands to attack the problem frontally they could easily find solution to it. The Punjab issue is a national issue and it demands all parties co-operation. It is a peculiar problem and even religious leaders should also sit together to hammer out a solution. The organised communal violence has nothing to do with the genuine demands of the political

party: it is part of the conspiracy of some of the anti-national elements and nefarious foreign forces to distabilise and weaken India. Whoever ignores this aspect is bound to misread the situation in the Punjab.

Every nation has its birth pangs. In the case of India it was all the more acute as independence involved a partition in the country. The period preceding the partition and soon after was marked by communal violence between Hindus and Muslims of a magnitude not witnessed before. Probably these were the beginning of all communal violence. The first incident occurred in Calcutta on August 19, 1946, when the Muslim league launched, 'Direct Action Day', and by the end of October more than 100 persons were killed. Simultaneously serious riots broke out in Bombay and Allahabad, claiming over 500 lives. The riots spread to Bihar, Lahore, Amritsar and villages in Punjab. According to the official figures the total casualties in six months from November 1946 were 4014 killed and 3616 injured. The partitioning of the province of the Punjab between India and Pakistan led to several weeks of anarchy. The invasion of Kashmir in October 1947 by tribesmen operating from Pakistan further vitiated communal peace. Sporadic incidents of communal violence occurred as a result of local provocations like religious festi-

vities, property disputes and minor political issues. The year 1964 saw the most serious communal conflagration since 1947. In January, as a reaction to the reported violence against the Hindus in East Pakistan, communal violence occurred in West Bengal. In subsequent years communal peace became disturbed with increasing frequency.

One important thing for us to note is that almost all the communal riots which occurred were either inter-religious—between Hindus and Muslims or between Sikhs and Muslims. Christians never indulged in any such activities. Even at times where there were provocative incidents like burning Churches in Barampur, Ambala, etc. by certain anti-social elements, backed by a narrow-minded religious sects, Christians never retaliated. Atrocities upon the Christians in Arunachal Pradesh, killing of a priest in Bihar etc. speak volumes for Christian's forbearance where not a single incident was recorded in retaliation to such humiliations. In fact retaliation is not known to Christianity; on the contrary it was taught to bear with such onslaughts of religious maladies. History will vouch for this claim.

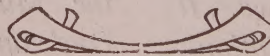
Whatever may be our stand, it is essential on our part to develop more public relations and friendly ties with people of other faiths. We need to create more common platforms where

we, together with our friends, can share so of the problems of the society and express concern for national issues. It is our identity with the people irrespective of caste, creed and religion that counts more now in such matters relating to the communal amity.

We can think of peace centres or dialogues centres where people of particular place or community can come together and participate in discussions on recreational, cultural, and other common activities. This centre should act as a social agency that represents the efforts of people to promote community solidarity and to improve certain aspects of life of a local community. It enables people to become active and articulate neighbours having concern for common well-being. The centre should instil a new spirit in the residents of the locality for revitalisation of community living through mutual co-operation.

However, we, as true Christians and true patriots of our motherland shall not involve ourselves in any untoward activities which disturb the peace and normal life of society. Jesus Christ is our example who never uttered a word against anyone even when He was nailed to the cross. On the contrary He prayed that those who were persecuting Him should be forgiven. That should be our prayer today.

—DASS BABU.



MR. P. ROBERT GURUSWAMY AND

MR. FRANCIS SOUNDARA RAJ

Madras

The Holy Spirit in the Church

I. The Holy Spirit then and now :

It is true that in the Old Testament the personal experience of the Spirit of God was realized by individuals and that it enabled many to know the purpose of God, accept His call, serve Him and to lead His people. Moses, Samuel, Isaiah, Amos and many others symbolize that kind of experience. At the same time the work of the Spirit cannot be oversimplified that way, even in an attempt to comprehend it within the limits of the experience portrayed in the Old Testament. The work of the Spirit in creation, in equipping men for service, in inspiring the prophets, in promoting moral living in the community and in anticipating the Redeemer cannot be belittled. Nevertheless the greater experience of the Holy Spirit by people as individuals and community became abundantly available after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, with the fulfilment of His promise to send into the world the Counsellor and Comforter.

Our own experience of the Holy Spirit as persons and members of congregations at least partially reveals this. The greater search for, and eagerness to acquire, the fruits of the Holy Spirit—such as speaking in tongues, for example the greater emphasis laid on the observance of Trinity Sunday and the celebration of Pentecost ; and the awesome reverence for baptism by the Spirit are indications of such revelation. Ours is an age of democracy and the masses ; therefore a collective experience of the Holy Spirit in units larger than the individual is inevitable ; and we believe that the institution of democracy is of God, as it makes for greater justice. It is not surprising that the Spirit has worked, and continues to work through groups of good and wise men in most congregations to help the worshipper discern God's revelation in edifying sermons, to promote the moral living of people, to render service to the helpless in spirit and body and to seek also other ways of establishing the Kingdom of God upon earth. While that can be said in an attitude of self-congratulation, we ought also to be painfully aware of the spirit of anonymity and apathy that democracy has brought with it. The 'safe-in-the-crowd' attitude has made for us an unhappy situation in which less and less emphasis is being placed on individual initiative and responsibility, so much so a general indifference has resulted. This perhaps, accounts for the unwillingness to attempt to discern the revelation of the power of the Spirit in our life and situation. We are under no obligation to do it, unlike the men of the Old Testament. The Church's failure in highlighting the teaching about the Holy Spirit is also another reason in point. Thanks be to God, men and women are slowly awakened to perceive these shortcomings, and even this is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit !

II. The Apostolic Church and the Church Today :

The early Church was an ideal 'Koinonia', a fellowship knit together by the overwhelming presence and power of the Holy Spirit. The life of the Church was marked by unity and harmony to such an extent that sharing of resources was mutual and complete ; faith was universal, as the attempts to create schisms were speedily admonished out of the community ; the power of the Pentecost was manifest in its abundant fruits which covered the whole of life ; evangelism knew no impediments, not even death ; routine matters—including marriage and celibacy—were viewed from the point of view of the Parousia. Church government was least authoritative as commissioning by laying on of hands was primarily viewed as a preparation for a service of self-giving. All this was nothing but the visible testimony to the moving spirit that guided, consoled, directed and governed Christian Life. This is not a romantic panegyric ; it is only as real as any programme that is carried out at the onset of a charismatic drive. The reconstruction of a new society following a revolution, the fresh and ideal start that a new career or opportunity may give one are analogous to the experience of the Holy Spirit described above, with the difference that these mundane things lack the divine spark and inspiration. The Koinonia is a spiritual body insouled and propelled by the Spirit of God, not a mere charisma.

Our Church today bears some features of such an ideal Church. Corporate worship which brings people together is above discrimination of caste or sex or class. The zeal for evangelism is prevalent and almost all congregations pursue programmes of evangelism. Devotion and prayer go hand in hand with meeting the needs of the poor and visiting the sick and the handicapped. The universal Church, with its global organizations, maintains harmony in belief by definition of doctrine. The working of the Holy Spirit is only too evident in movements which promote ecumenism. Individual and corporate experience of the Holy Spirit in speaking in tongues and in the manifestations of the fruits of the Spirit is not absent. Personal testimonies, all night prayers, festivals of evangelism, special worship services and other means of expressing piety are marks of the working of the Spirit.

However, the differences are disheartening. It is very doubtful whether we could say with confidence that the life of the Church bears witness to the overwhelming zeal and presence of the Holy Spirit. Had it been so, all that is mentioned above would not have been mere 'forms' without content, mere rituals which follow a routine. Our fellowship is corporate, no doubt, but it lacks the warmth and the concern that each member of

the ideal 'koinonia' ought to have for the other. Our faith is confined to the mutterings of formulated doctrines, and schisms are rampant. Our Church administration is generally marred by self-acquisitive, rather than self-giving motives; leadership is a matter of personal authority and reputation, not one of enabling stewardship. Church structures have proliferated secular interests and service organisations have become pockets of dissension, discontent and corruption. It is nothing but folly for one to say that such is the witness of the working of the Holy Spirit.

Total as this condemnation of the present Church may seem, it is still true that the Power of the Spirit has not given away all for lost. It continues to revive what is dead, strengthen what is weak and uphold the good that has fallen into disuse. All that is required is for the individual congregations to be vigilant and committed and honest to the guidance of the Spirit. The commitment of the preacher to the knowledge about and pastoral ministry, to the particular needs of his flock and his dedication to the task, by no means easy, of building up the spiritual life of his congregation by statistically reducing the incidence of unChristian activity as well as by preparing a younger generation of spiritually committed stewards of Christ will go a long way to recapture the brilliance of the witness of the Holy Spirit. Greater personal involvement of a larger number of Christians in the act of worship—by means of extempore worship, praying for specific needs with fervency, speaking in tongues, ministering to the needs of those around, and many others—is another way of invoking the Spirit to preside over the life of the Church. Bible study, group sharing, revival meetings and personal testimonies may be followed up by specific programmes for action not only to vouch for the presence of the Holy Spirit in such gatherings but also to carry on the zeal of the great apostles of the early Church and of our own early missionaries. Orders of worship services may be altered so as to accommodate some of the objectives stated above. On the whole our Church will do well to put itself on a war path to recover the ground we have lost in our callous indulgence in the mundane and meaner glory of the world.

III. Towards recapturing the power of the Spirit :

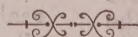
The areas of our Church where witness to the Holy Spirit is almost absent are : (a) Church government ; (b) involvement in Christian life ; and (c) Improvement of the neighbour (which includes national development). As for the first, it is needless to say that the state of affairs is far from satisfactory. Disturbed Church elections ; discord between pastors and members of pastorate committees ; predilection for rule-governed ethos, where love ought to predominate ; rigid adherence to secular and political structures in Church government ; negation of the fruits of the spirit in procedure consciousness ; and a host of other related ills conspire against the working of the Holy Spirit. We have replaced the radiance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit by the obscuring cloud of the selfishness of our Ugly Spirit. As for the second, involvement in Christian life is nothing more than a matter of observance of modalities through forms of worship

and activity which have nothing about them to recommend the power of the Spirit to others. It is for this reason Christians are increasingly losing public credibility. Honest endeavour, selfless service and virtuous living which were once synonymous with the term 'Christian'. For Christians are exempt from the normal ills of a godless life. They are no longer unique in the sense Christ is unique. As for the third, the Church has become a drifting body with no clear prospect for the future possibilities and action. Busy cares beset it ; worldly pursuits pervert it ; fanaticism quells its spirit ; and its role in national and international service and development has become minimal. The local congregation comes under censure to the extent it shares this guilt with the World Church. Very few Christians are found to be interested and involved in tasks of national reconstruction and service to the oppressed and the underprivileged. Again, this is left to organisations which operate impersonally and without love.

All this calls for radical reform. Church Government ought to be primarily conducive to the witness to the Holy Spirit. And one of the first marks of that witness is the absence of strife. Church elections may be replaced by consensus or by the organisation of a governing body on principles which are not merely and impersonally democratic. Representation on such a body may be given to those who are really involved in the work of the congregation such as the Sunday School Superintendent, the Youth Worker, the Evangelical Secretary, the Christian educationist, and such others who are found to be actively involved in Church work. The salient features of community living may be actively imbibed through pooling of resources, judicious handling of available talents and resources, and through caring for one another in a more positive way. The Presbyterian ought primarily to be praying and ministering guardian and he must be completely relieved from secular duties. A positive dissociation of Church structures from the secular aura may be realised in giving up names that savour power and corruption. 'committees' and 'ministers' may be better named 'helpers' or 'elders' and 'pastors' or 'Ayya'. Centralised policy making and effective decentralised executive operations may promote credibility, efficiency and accountability in the functioning of the Church.

The foremost need of the Church of South India is an onward thrust in realising effective unity and evangelism in the light of the foregoing account of the understanding of the Holy Spirit in the Church. All that goes against such ecumenical mission—such as over-centralisation of executive functions, uncreative uniformity, institutionalism, communalism and other vested interests—ought to be met and overcome with no less a zeal than that of St. Paul who forged the unity of the Jew and the gentile, decentralised ministries and gained the whole world for Christ. The Church needs a conversion born of a radically transformed nature, the vouching of the Spirit-in-Action. As responsible Christians, whose accountability is not negotiable before the throne of His judgement, we ought to be satisfied with nothing less.

(Compiled out of Discussion at the CSI Synod Meeting of January 1984.)



Christian Concern for Ecology and Environment

MR. EARNEST P. FRITSCHI., *Karigiri.*

Introduction

This paper should rightly begin with a consideration in detail of the Theological perspectives of our planet—Who made it?—to whom does it belong?—What is the goal and purpose for which it was established?—Who is responsible for its operation, its productivity, its general maintenance, its safety regulations and monitoring, the disposal of its wastes, and the conservation of its potentials in raw materials, in energy and in beauty?

The answers to these questions differ according to the thinking of the man who answers them. The Psalmist was uncompromising.

'The Earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the World and those who dwell therein, for he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers' Ps. 24 : 1.

If then the earth is the inspiration, the creation and the property of God himself then surely the Christian—a member of the Body of Christ, must have a responsibility in its prosperity, its productivity and its preservation.

Is the Church aware of its role and responsibility?

Perhaps as an institution it may be said that the Church's major concern has been directly towards *people*. She has pioneered health and development projects throughout the past century and earlier. It may perhaps even be claimed that the whole logistics of health care systems, both the old and the new have been brought about by the interest and initiative of the Church. However, I do not think that preservation of the environment or stewardship of the earth's resources has ever featured in the agenda of a Diocesan Assembly I may be wrong.

But if the Church as a body has not consciously espoused this cause, there can be no denying that her members have been in the forefront of almost every effort in that direction, from Shumacher's appropriate technology groups to A.F.P.R.O. here in India and more recently E.F.I.C.O.R. and countless other groups.

How can the Church promote environmental concern?

There are two time-honoured pastoral techniques used for advancing the teachings of the Church, namely, by proclamation and by example—if you like, by word and deed.

Proclamation

The Church is the custodian, or may perhaps even claim to be the interpreter, of the Christian ethic. How

does this role impinge on our topic? What is it that the Church must preach to promote environmental concern, and Why?

If one visits countries with vast stretches of primary forests such as Malaysia, the full impact of the extensive destruction of forests strikes one forcefully. Hectares of dense forest are denuded of every scrap of vegetation. Whole hillsides are covered with short grass or housing complexes, and we are told that a few years ago it was primary forest!

Less striking, but ecologically equally disastrous, in our country is the devastation of the forests of Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Places, where as a child with my brother I played in a stream in primary forest, are now eucalyptus plantations and the stream is a bed of dry rocks; Rolling, down country, which I still vividly remember, has been, reduced to rough gravel mounds which had produced for a few short years crops of potatoes, annually becoming less as the defenceless soil was washed down the muddy rivers by the rains.

Near Palmaneru and on the North West face of the Yelagiri Hills, extensive areas of primary scrub jungle were burnt down 3 months ago and now a few shoots of Eucalyptus are appearing in the ravaged countryside—Eucalyptus which, in a few short years, will effectively dry up the sub-soil water and contribute to the decrease of the environmental humidity upon which the rainfall depends.

I could go on but it is not my intention merely to whip up emotion, but to ask the question Why? What is it that is responsible for this destruction?

In the Nilgiris the tea planters and local land owners have made small fortunes from Eucalyptus, and potatoes. In Palmaneru and the Yelagiri Hills the forest department itself—reputedly the conservator of the ecology—has responded to political directives to produce an income. In Malaysia Timber Contractors and Housing Estate Builders have become millionaires from their activities. Wherever one finds examples of devastation, the basic urge behind them is one of self-enrichment-greed-selfishness—The worship and pursuit of money. Surely a Church concern!

From the beginning of organised society in the Old Testament, Moses laid upon the Israelites the responsibility of protecting the sojourner in the land and the poor of the land—The law of the seventh year, in which fields should be left fallow to re-generate their fertility, (Exod. 23 : 10).

The law that harvesting should be incomplete and leave behind something for the poor (Lev. 9 : 18), and, continuing in the same spirit, some centuries later on, John the Baptist urges his hearers :

'He that has two coats let him give to him that has none' (Luk. 3 : 11).

Jesus himself also resets our sights :

'Labour not for the food which perishes' (Jn. 6 : 27).
'Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth' (Matt. 6 : 19)....

Consider the lillies they toil not neither do they reap—yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these' (Matt. 6 : 28).

What has the Church to say today on the subject of greed—covetousness the amassing of wealth—and the ways by which this is done, often by open corruption and bribery ?

What would happen to our visible churches if our clergy were to antagonise some of their wealthy members by such preaching ?

What is the Church proclaiming today that will preserve the resources still remaining and also at the same time ensure a more equitable distribution of the earth's bounty ?

Water—Husbandry verses exploitation

During these past few years of drought hundreds of wells have been sunk under Church auspices to bring water to the thirsty villagers. Good ! It has saved their lives, but why was it necessary ? Because land owners have deepened their wells, sucked out the milk from the breasts of the earth by powerful electric pumps, leaving the people no alternative but to dig deeper, to bore faster and lower, until perhaps we suck the very life blood from its dry breasts. And who has benefited ? A few rich land owners who have stolen three wet crops in the year, and some politician has scooped up a few more votes to keep them in power.

There are only two possible sources of the water we suck, either it must come from the sea and be desalinated by some mysterious process of chemical absorption, which technology has not yet been able to reproduce, or it must come by distillation in the clouds to descend as rain—a far more likely process. But with the water table going down year by year, and borewells going deeper and deeper, scrambling after the receding levels, where will it all end ? There is no such thing as an *aquifer*, we can't *make* water we can only exploit it, conserve it, or use it responsibly and with foresight. Which of these three alternatives is the Church promoting ?

What can the Church do for the conservation and restoration of the earth ?

Forestry :

The Church possesses no small area of land in plots around the Church buildings and in its institutions. What have we done by way of tree planting ? I am always astonished at the argument that we may need the land for something else ! If and when we do, let's cut down the excess of trees. The whole of nature is based on an enormous prolificity—millions of sperms in one emission, but only one fertilises the ovum ; lakhs of seeds shed by one tree but only a few surviving ; this is the Law of Nature—so why

not the Church also plant trees ? Not ceremonially one by one, with a silver trowel, but crowding every spare plot of ground ! It takes 15 minutes to cut down a tree if it is in the wrong place. It takes years to grow them.

Water :

We have already alluded to this earlier. Where possible the Church in its institutions, must demonstrate conservatory measures—percolation dams—conscious limiting multiple cropping at least to one or two low water-dependent items per year, in place of the water-greedy rice.

Soil :

Paradoxically our parts of this country are becoming desertified by the 'green revolution'. Exotic new hybrids of rice are introduced guaranteed to produce 3-4 times more per acre than the old strains. But, they require stipulated doses of artificial fertilizer, and periodic spraying with poisonous insecticides.

The result ?—higher yields, more money, soil which deprived of the centuries old traditionally used humus producing leaves and cattle manure and which is progressively becoming a mere sterile culture pan which will never again support a crop without the artificial additives of N.K. and P., and finally fields and countryside that have been effectively deprived of natural defence against insect pests in the form of insectivorous frogs and other biological controls which cannot survive on poisoned land.

What can the Church do about that ? Possibly little directly, but it can sponsor farmers meetings and bring its ecologically concerned experts to spend time with them and explain the importance of soil and humus conservation and not a sole reliance on chemical additives. Even if some of us may have our doubts as to what the future of our children have, it is still necessary for the Church to proclaim the Lordship of the Triune God of the land which we cultivate.

Energy :

Sources of power and energy must be viewed from a philosophical angle. Our grandmothers looked out the morning and saw the sunshine and the fresh breeze and said :

'Ah ! a good day for the washing.'

Nowadays we merely fill up our washing machine with put in detergent and turn a switch.

Still today, thank God, in most Indian homes, food is ground direct from the whole grain in mills, vegetables are cut in the home and prepared, and masala is hand ground to result in a tasty nutritious and wholesome meal. But progressively the supermarkets are filling up with 'instant' products—made by machines out of purified and 'refined' materials and poisoned vegetables, to which are then added synthetic vitamins to compensate for the natural ones that have been destroyed by the refining and manufacturing processes—the result is, time is saved, labour is reduced, the family is constipated, costly pharmaceuticals must be bought to correct this, a good time and income is had by all, and the mental health services of our hospitals get more clients.

(Contd. on page 12)

South Indian Sabbatical

CANON COLIN SCOTT AND MARGARET SCOTT, *England.*

A Sabbatical year was originally time to leave the ground fallow that it might recover from the years of cultivation. Rest and renewal are still important aspects of sabbatical leave, but something more is needed. After 25 years in full-time ministry I felt the need to test out the habits and assumptions of my own ministry and of the church and society of which I am a part. For many an academic course is the ideal sabbatical with the opportunity to explore new ideas with disciplined study. We chose to travel, living in a society whose outlook, customs and economy were radically different from our own and to share the life of another church. Following a suggestion of Ivor Smith-Cameron I asked to go to India as the guest of the Church of South India for three months. Generous help from our parish and a timely legacy enabled Margaret to come with me. We went neither to minister nor to make any kind of critical assessment of that church but to learn. The experience has been unforgettable and our lives have been enriched by the generosity of all who welcomed us into their homes and enabled us to see and understand something of their lives and work. What follows are the purely personal insights we have gained from this first visit to India?

Impact of South India

It is hard to summarise so many impressions; sights and smells, scenes and individuals crowd one's memory, the timeless progress of a bullock cart, the impatient honking of car horns, office blocks and mud huts all form parts of a mosaic, but certain impressions stand out. First there is the eastern attitude to time. In England time is measured out, our crowded diaries allocate so many minutes to each engagement. Our Indian hosts gave total, unhurried attention to whoever was with them at that particular time. Of course this put programmes behind schedule, we learnt to wait patiently. But we also learnt the value of concentrating on one thing, one person, at a time. A guest is welcomed as if he were a god, such is the custom of Indian hospitality. For the visitor from England it is a humbling experience.

Then there is the vastness of the country and the diversity of its people. Although our visit was deliberately limited to the four Southern States, yet even here were, in many ways, four nations, each with its own language, culture, customs and government. The central government in Delhi seemed remote, the national language, Hindi, was seldom heard, India is still an empire, a federation of states, differing in geography, history and sentiment. This makes generalisations dangerous but certain impressions remain. Life is always public—the Indian reality where privacy is curious and a luxury' (Salmon Rashdie)—for the great majority of homes are too small to contain the activities of daily life and the climate makes the city pavement or the village street the centre of social and family life. Yet there is a self-possession which enables people to continue family life among the crowd, cooking the evening meal on the pavement or settling for the night on a second class sleeper with complete dignity.

The third impression is the contrast between the back breaking toil of rural India where everything is done by hand and where 70% still live in villages and the sophistication of advanced technology. We saw granite chips for road mending, laboriously produced with hammer and chisel; we also visited the radio astronomy centre at Ootacamund one of the three most advanced in the world, where every single component, except for the computers, was made in India. Sadly the technological revolution accomplished since Independence has not succeeded in lessening the gap between the rich and the poor. National wealth has increased, but over the same period the population has doubled. Some nonetheless maintain that India has still the capacity to feed itself adequately were wealth and resources better distributed.

Cities still contain many reminders of the British Raj, in great Victorian buildings and statues of King-Emperors, in parks and place names. In South India at least there has been little move as elsewhere to obliterate these signs of the imperial past. But though most educated Indians speak English, there are few Europeans to be seen in South India today, a few business men in Madras, tourists at Kovalum beach, hippies at Kodaikanal, but otherwise, especially in rural areas a white face attracts attention. Few items of British news earn a mention in the newspapers. Russia is of as much interest as Britain or America, for India is careful to be non-aligned. Politically and economically she values her independence. She has retained a British style parliamentary government and legal system but has not forgotten that commercial exploitation was always the principle reason for the British presence in India. They hold Britain responsible for many of India's present-day economic problems. 'Present-day India owes a great deal to the first decades of the Nineteenth Century which decided the course of its economy and created certain influences which the country has not yet been able to undo. Primarily, the ruin of the Indian rural economy dates to 1810-30.' (South India—Lustre Press.)

In theory India is a secular state without discrimination on grounds of religion. In practice it is deeply Hindu. Philosophy, culture, architecture, folk lore, music ideals, it is impossible to say which are Indian and which are Hindu. Indeed etymologically the two words are the same. In consequence the early missionaries and first converts tended to avoid everything Indian as being Hindu, and so established a church whose liturgy, music and customs were essentially foreign and whose members bore Western names.

In one sense Hinduism is not ordinarily a religion, for some Hindus it is rather a philosophy, a way of life, nourished by stories of gods which are understood as edifying myths or allegories. It is the form of Hinduism which has so particularly attracted Christians like Bede Griffiths, who find its self-renunciation and acceptance of the whole of life an attractive ideal with many points of contact with Christian experience. Yet this is far

removed from the piety of most Hindus to whom the divinities of the Hindu pantheon are not so much different aspects of the one Brahman, but individual gods to be worshipped, persuaded or placated.

The Church in South India

Christianity has been in South India longer than in England (if you discount individual Christians in the Roman army here). Even if it was not St. Thomas himself who brought the Gospel to South India, the Syrian Orthodox Church was established there by the second or third centuries. But sadly for the next sixteen centuries this church made little impact on its Hindu neighbours. It was thus left to missionaries from the West to evangelise South India and, in so doing, impart Western forms to the Indian Church. As indicated earlier, they avoided anything of Indian culture which might have Hindu associations in people's minds and so baptised converts with European names, built churches in Gothic Style, used Western music, instruments and dress. They translated Hymns Ancient and Modern and the Book of Common Prayer into local languages rather than seeking Indian forms of worship. In many churches this Western influence is still obvious but many church leaders, from the great Bishop Azariah of Dornakal onwards, have challenged the Church to become truly Indian. Now it is common to see Dravidian architecture in church buildings and to hear music and lyrics indigenous to South India. Some too have adapted the spiritual disciplines of yoga to Christian use and use all that is best and potentially Christian in Indian spirituality. Bishop Sundar Clarke, Bishop in Madras, in his book, 'Let the Indian Church be Indian' challenges the Church of South India to take this further in its life and worship today and challenges too, as Bishop Azariah had done, the dependence of the Church for some areas of its work on money from overseas.

The Church of South India has been the pioneer of church unity in this century. Formed in 1947 by the union of Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational churches, it represents in reality an even greater achievement of unity, for each denomination was represented by more than one mission board or society, each acting in most respects as a separate church. One reason for our visit to South India was to learn from their experience of union such lessons as might be helpful to churches in England exploring the way ahead to closer unity.

The sense of being one church was clear when we visited the C.S.I. Synod and in the different dioceses, but at the local level old loyalties sometimes linger on. Churches and institutions still bore in some areas old mission or denominational labels, C.M.S., U.S.P.G., L.M.S., Basel Mission, Wesley, etc. Generally this was an affectionate attachment to their past heritage, occasionally it was a tenacious hold on a particular tradition which could jeopardise fellowship with neighbouring congregations, but in either case it implied a foreign link and even control which was misleading and unhelpful. The situation in England is different in many ways but one lesson does seem relevant, unity must be a living experience of local churches in active co-operation before national schemes can ever achieve any real credibility.

A different sort of disunity is a greater problem for the Church of South India. In a number of cases groups within a diocese or pastorate (roughly the equivalent of an Anglican parish) vie for positions of influence or power. Not only are church elections canvassed with a

disconcerting directness but disappointed candidates may even resort to civil courts to challenge the result. This illustrates the sad but widespread experience that in most countries the Church too easily reflects the prejudices and weaknesses of the society of which it is a part instead of challenging and overcoming them. Nonetheless it was a salutary warning to see how easily ambition can influence otherwise able and devoted pastors. Perhaps the difference in England is that we conceal the desire for power more discretely!

On the more positive side two strengths of the Church of South India have much to teach us in the West. One is its concern for social justice. Unlike the ancient Syrian Orthodox Church, the C.S.I. has been predominantly the church of the poor and outcasts for these were the first to respond to the Gospel. It has been natural therefore for the Church to identify with the poor and oppressed. This has meant not only extensive involvement in social action, with practical assistance for the poor, the unemployed and the handicapped, but also championing of social justice and challenging any denial of human rights or corruption in society. Increasingly the Church has seen the need to change from 'aid' to 'development', from doing things for people to enabling and encouraging them to act for themselves. Inevitably the picture is mixed, in some areas the church seems mainly concerned with the needs of the Christian poor, or aid is seen as an adjunct of evangelism; in others social justice is seen as an integral part of the Christian mission. Dr. Dyanchand Carr, director of the Rural Theological Institute of Tamil Nadu Theological Seminary, writes, 'The repeated Biblical demand that we should take up the cause of the widows, the fatherless and the oppressed in the Old Testament (Ps. 82:2-4; Is. 1:12-17; Micah 6:6-8) and Jesus' Nazareth Manifesto (Luke 4:16-18) make it abundantly clear that liberation of the oppressed is an important part of the Church's Mission.' (Solidarity of the Oppressed, Robinson & Carr, TTS.) In this Seminary they do not merely teach about such liberation, staff and students work in the city slums and the surrounding villages to make it a reality.

The other great strength of the Indian Church lies in the prayer life of its women. Family prayers, probably morning and evening, would be normal for any Christian household. For most men however there would be no other time of personal prayer but many women spend much time in prayer for their families and for the life and work of the Church. In some cases this may be accompanied by fasting. It might not be wholly inaccurate to say that while men serve on committees, women pray. It is not difficult to speculate which accomplishes most. In part this dichotomy reflects the different roles of men and women in society. Women are traditionally silent, self-effacing, serving husband and guests without sitting down to eat with them. Despite having a woman Prime Minister, few women in Indian Society would expect to be elected to positions of leadership in Church or State. Even women with responsible, well paid jobs will accept their traditionally subservient role in social and family life, though this is slowly changing.

Lessons we have learnt

Only time will show the extent to which South India has had a lasting effect on us. But it is helpful to us at least to set down the insights we have gained and how we hope they will affect us in the future.

First is in the attitude to time. The pace of life is different in England and dependence on a diary is unavoidable, but we shall seek to develop the Indian gift of attentiveness to whomsoever is with us and a readiness to revise the time-table whenever more time is needed.

Secondly, we have been deeply impressed by the hospitality we have received and by the helpfulness of chance strangers in the street, who spared no effort to help us if we were lost or in language difficulties. We want to give a new priority to the use of our home as a place to welcome visitors and strengthen friendships.

The third lesson is different and more personal. At times in the ambition and search for power of some church leaders I saw a disconcerting reflection of my own face. The fact that they were more open about it compelled me to face what I was concealing from myself. The lesson was a humbling and chastening one.

We were helped too by the ready assumption that families and friends would pray together; certainly no pastor would leave a home without prayer. We recognise how inhibited English Christians, including ourselves, have become by the prevailing secularity of our generation and resolved to continue praying as naturally as we have in India.

Priorities for English Church Life

We had been able to visit South India because Christians in England had enabled us to go and Christians in India had generously made us welcome. We recognise the responsibility this lays on us to interpret the Church in India to Christians in England. In this regard we were especially privileged to have been guests at their two-yearly Synod.

The Church of South India is a Church and not a mission field. They find it curious and inappropriate therefore that they relate to the Church of England primarily through its missionary societies, they would much prefer to relate to each other as sister churches. Why indeed in such circumstances do we call expatriates 'missionaries'? Surely some other word such as 'partners' would be more appropriate now that none are engaged in direct evangelism. The Church of South India has no wish to sever links and values friendship with Churches in England as with that in other countries; but in practical terms the opportunities for missionaries to go to India are rapidly disappearing. Understandably the Indian government, like our own, will not give a visa to someone from overseas to do a job one of its own citizens could have done.

This means that if fellowship between our churches is to continue, new forms of partnership are needed. Visits such as ours are one such opportunity and such visits are needed in both directions. From the English end these would most naturally be arranged by dioceses or missionary societies. At present C.M.S. and U.S.P.G. offer bursaries at Selly Oak Colleges but these bursary students

see too little of English parish life. Diocesan involvement could help here. From the Indian end it is felt important to arrange such visits through the Synod. Private arrangements with individuals or dioceses have led in the past to competitiveness for such invitations and the mistaken expectation that those who go may be able to find finance for local projects from overseas. To avoid such misuse of visits, invitations are carefully allocated through Synod committees. Visits by young people as volunteers for 1, 2 or 3 years can all help to strengthen understanding and deepen fellowship.

At present partnership cannot be wholly symmetrical in financial terms. The relative affluence of the West means that certain social action programmes and development projects in India are funded in part by donor agencies in Europe or America. Although much valuable work has been assisted in this way, it has also created problems. Some donor agencies have insisted on a standard of living in their institutions which has alienated some beneficiaries from their families and villages. Some so-called 'adoption' schemes have been particularly vulnerable in this way. Some Indians, such as Bishop Sundar Clarke, have called for a progressive phasing out of dependence on such grants over a period of years and this would seem wise. But the extensive payroll of many projects creates its own resistance to such ideas.

So the request is not for more aid, rather for less. What is given meanwhile should be for priorities identified by the Indian Church; for programmes of limited duration which are directed to enable communities to work out their own solutions. It should never be such as will create long term dependence.

What the Indian Church does ask is that the Church in the West should share its struggle for social justice, not only within nations but between nations. This will involve a Christian appraisal of the ethics of international trade and the policies of transnational corporations and, wherever appropriate, presume on politicians to see that justice is done and the law of the market place does not become the law of the jungle. Christians in India ask us in the West to look honestly at the implications of the arms trade. 'It is not without significance that virtually all the wars since 1945 have been fought in the developing countries. And this fact becomes all the more crucial if we perceive the link between the outbreak of wars and the volume of the arms trade introduced by the Western rich nations through the power of the 'industrial-military complex' (to use the phrase of President Eisenhower).' (Witnessing in India Today—M. Azariah). The Church in India finds the silence of Western Christians on issues of world peace and development strange and disturbing.

Finally the Church in South India gave us the opportunity to form many personal friendships which have enriched and will continue to enrich our lives. We hope that continued contact will enable us to share their insights with others and that we may in return help them to interpret the Churches in England to their fellow Christians in India.



Communicating The Good News

RT. REV. SETH, *Shoranur*

Bible lesson: 2 Kings 7:9. '... We have good news and shouldn't keep it to ourselves. If we wait until morning to tell it, we are sure to be punished. Let's go at once and tell the king's officers!'

This is a great missionary parable in the Old Testament. The four leprosy men of the parable felt guilty at keeping the good news to themselves and feared punishment if they did so any longer (9). There is a similar compulsion, even fear seen in the New Testament. St. Paul says we persuade men knowing the terror of the Lord (2 Cor. 5:11). This is the experience of all who found the treasures of the gospel. St. Paul says to the Corinthians 'woe to me if I do not communicate the gospel' (1 Cor. 9:16). The four leprosy men went back to their own people and communicated the news.

Christians are only less than 3% in our country of about 70 crores of people. There are unevangelised areas in our country. There are places where conveyance is not available. There are people who cannot read and write. The communication department of the C.S.I. should make a detailed research as to how to communicate the good news in the unreached areas of our country where thousands and thousands of people live without the knowledge of Jesus.

The leprosy men in the parable were prompted by gratitude than obligation. We may sometimes find it difficult to work up sufficient love to motivate the communication of the good news. Then, let duty compel us. St. Paul says to the Romans 'I am a debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise (Rom. 1:14).

For the efficiency of the communication of the news, those who are engaged in this work should have concern for ever one, whoever they are. In the book of Jonah we are shown the concern of God, for every one. Let us have this God's concern for every one of His creation (Jonah 4:1-11). Our responsibility is how can we show our concern in the present set up.

In this century media of communication has developed and progressed to a great extent in the secular sphere. What are the media of communication in the church for efficient propagation of the news. We have to make a detailed survey of this.

There is a place for enthusiasm in communicating the news. The word enthusiasm comes from a Greek word *en* (in) and *theos* (God) i.e. 'God in you'. King David is seen as a man full of enthusiasm. Enthusiasm for the

love for God. He leaped and danced for joy. By dance he communicated the enthusiasm for the love for God. In order to do this he rewarded all those which were holding him back from doing this.

When David danced his wife, Queen Michal, despised him. She thought that he behaved like one of the vain fellows who has no shame. She told him that he disgraced his position as king of Israel, by dancing.

By seeing our enthusiasm in communicating the news some people may sneer at us. But don't let these sneering of other people stop us from communicating the gospel.

David said to Michal 'It was before the Lord, who chose me before your father, before all his house, to appoint me ruler and king over all the people of the Lord, our Israel; therefore I will dance. I will yet be more dancing than this' (2 Sam. 6:16-23).

It is not enough to communicate and just leave it at that. We must do all we can for the follow up (Jeremiah 36:3). This does not mean that we should be pushing at the expense of other religions in this country. It simply means that we should do all we possibly can for the follow up.

We have no right to say that everyone has had enough chances to believe. Like Jeremiah, we must give the people as many chances as possible to hear the news.

There is also no need to give up just because things seem impossible. Jeremiah was forbidden to go into the temple. So he sent Baruch to Communicate the news (Jer. 36:1-10).

Rev. Dr. Han at the biggest Presbyterian church in South Korea told what he and the people of his church did in a similar situation. They were forbidden to enter into North Korea to communicate the message of Jesus Christ. Literature confining the message of salvation was not allowed. So they erected a huge and tall illuminating Cross on the border which divided North Korea from South Korea and communicated the message of Christ through a built-in speaker in the illuminating Cross and Radio system.

The Communication of the Good News is very important and we want this department of the Synod make the news easily available to millions of people living in nooks and corners, in forest and hills, in villages, towns and in cities and in the slums of our great country. We want the news of Jesus Christ attractively Communicated, using Indian music and other art forms.



WIND FROM CAREY'S GARDEN

MR. CHARLES NEWTON

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the death of William Carey.

Carey, a weaver's son, was born in Northampton, England, in 1761, and came to India in 1793 as one of the first two British missionaries in this country. Selecting Serampore as his headquarters, he standardized Bengali orthography, despite the fact that, to quote his words, 'My pundit changes his opinion so frequently. Still I venture to say that our MSS are much correcter than any of their own'.

A Bengali scholar, Dr. Sushil Kumar De, in his *History of Bengali Literature*, says: 'Carey was the centre of the learned Bengali, whom his zeal attracted around him. The impetus which he gave to Bengali learning is to be measured not merely by his productions and his educational labours but by the influence he exerted and the example he set'.

Centre of Activity

In 1800, the Marquis of Wellesley, as Governor-General of India, had founded Fort William College to fill the gaps in the extremely rudimentary education of the young writers (clerks) of the East India Company. Carey was appointed Professor of Bengali and Sanskrit at the college. His room became the centre of literary activity and according to Dr. De 'the best intellects and scholars of the country met in friendly-intercourse at Fort William'. Closely allied to the College was the Asiatic Society, of which Carey became a member in 1806.

In the first year of the College's existence, Carey produced a Bengali Grammar and Colloquies. The former book, based on Halhed's, was according to Dr. De, 'an original contribution to the study of the language'. The colloquies were described by Professor H.H. Wilson of Oxford as 'a lively picture of the manners and notions of the people of Bengali'.

Some of Carey's pundits produced excellent Bengali translations of Sanskrit and Persian stories, fables, works on Jurisprudence, illustrative essays, and the first Bengali prose version of the Gita. Carey and Marshman attempted a translation of Ramayana, which they intended to complete in 10 volumes for the benefit of the English-reading public but they could complete only three volumes by 1810, when pressure of work obstructed the continuance of the project. Unfortunately, it was never completed, because their press was gutted in a fire.

Rabindranath Tagore says: 'Carey was the pioneer of the revived interest in the vernacular'. This is a just

recognition of the great scholar's labours, for he produced a grammar for each of the following languages: Bengali, Sanskrit, Marathi, Punjabi, Telugu, Kanarese and even Bhutia, with Marshman's help. Carey tried to master Oriya also. He compiled three dictionaries for Bengali, Marathi and Sanskrit, and a Bhutia vocabulary. The Bengali dictionary comprised 80,000 words and was a standard work for many years.

Carey's press had types to print books in Hebrew, Greek, Persian, Arabic, Tamil, Nagari, Telugu, Bengali, Burmese, Marathi, Punjabi, Oriya, Chinese and Kashmiri. Most of the types were cast at the press, but the fire, mentioned earlier, destroyed a considerable quantity of the founts.

Wilberforce once said that Carey's proficiency in Sanskrit was acknowledged to be greater than that of Sir William Jones, or of any other European. Marshman had mastered Chinese, and the translation room at Serampore had pundits representing almost every Indian language as well as scholars from China and Afghanistan.

In addition to these activities, Carey was a great educationist. He built a network of 100 vernacular schools within a 20-mile radius of Serampore, with 8,000 children on the rolls and was the first to institute popular education in Bengal. So great was Carey's success that the Marquis of Hastings pressed him and Marshman to open schools in the newly-annexed area of Rajputana, and himself subscribed Rs. 8,000 for this purpose. The boarding schools for European boys and girls at Serampore were the best in Bengal, and a Col. Lawrie is recorded as saying: 'Everybody sent a son to Serampore'.

Serampore College, founded by Carey, is modern India's oldest university. From its inception in 1818 to 1857, when the first three major universities of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay were opened, Serampore College conducted courses, in arts, sciences and theology, and awarded its own degrees. In 1827, it was incorporated by a Danish Royal Charter, because at that time Serampore was a Danish possession. That Charter conferred on Serampore College the status of a university, equal to the Universities of Kiel and Copenhagen, with the authority to grant degree in all faculties, and thus brought into being the first university in the history of not only modern India, but of Asia.

Famous as the headquarters of the Baptist missionaries, Carey Marshman and Ward, the College is notable in many other ways as well.

It was a pioneer of printing in the English language in India. Of course from the very birth of the College, a Bengali monthly magazine *Dig Darshan* and a weekly newspaper, *Samachar Darpan*, were published. The monthly magazine was the first of its kind. In 1818, an English monthly journal, *The Friend of India*, was launched. Its purpose was to interpret India's problems to Europeans and Anglo-Indians and to win their sympathy. It condemned the practice of *suttee* and that drowning infants in the Sea.

Both these practices were stopped partly as a result of the relentless campaign waged by *The Friend of India*. *Thuggee* was another evil exposed by this paper. Later, the paper became a weekly, and after the foundation of *The Statesman* in 1875, it was bought by that paper, and, a few years afterwards, was merged in it.

In addition to Carey's multitude of interests, he was also a keen botanist and horticulturist. Professor Bruhl says: 'Many plants to be found in Bengal today came of seed first bird-borne or wind-sown from Carey's garden'.

In a paper read before the Asiatic Society, Carey described the agriculture of Dinajpur, its soil and methods of cultivation. He was the first to suggest an afforestation policy for India. During the absence in England of Roxburgh, Superintendent of the Royal Botanical Gardens at Sibpore, near Calcutta, this educationist and lexicographer edited and published his friend's *Hortus Bengalensis*, and after Roxburgh's death, his *flora Indica*. Of the 30,000 species of plants and trees that Roxburgh introduced in the gardens, Carey and his son were responsible for 110.

Carey was one of the founders of the Agri-Horticultural Society of India in 1820 and its extensive gardens in Alipore. He corresponded with botanists and agricultural societies all over the world. Even Livingstone, who was

exploring the interior of Africa at that time, offered aid, in a letter to Carey, by agreeing to send information on the flora of the areas he traversed.

It was at Serampore College that science was first thought in India, and where John Mack wrote the first textbook on chemistry in an Indian language. Possibly the most valuable asset at Serampore College now is its splendid Museum Library. It possesses copies of the first book in the Bengali language which was printed in 1743 in Lisbon in the Roman script; the first book in Bengali script.

Sanskrit Dictionary

Halhed's Bengali Grammar: a Persian MS by Fathallahi Jerome Xavier, a Portuguese missionary at Akbar's court who wrote this work on Jesus and his people at Jehangir's request in 1606: a paraphrase of the New Testament of Erasmus, printed in London in 1549, an early edition of Dr. Samuel Johnson's Dictionary of the English Language printed in original works, such as the first Bengali dictionary in three volumes, a Sanskrit dictionary in five volumes, a Polyglot dictionary in 13 Indian languages, the Bible in 35 Indian languages, including such obscure languages as Mooltanee, Kanoja, Harotee, Bhutane, Baghatcundee, Khoshala and Kunkina. It has also some palm leaf manuscripts in various languages collected by Carey and his associates, the earliest translations of the gospels in Tamil, Sinhalese, Persian, Malayalam, Armenian, Pali, Hindustani, Malay, Javanese, Burmese and Chinese.

The original printing press was transferred to Calcutta and its descendants, the Baptist Mission Press, till recently carried the proud boast at its gate that it printed in 100 languages.

Courtesy:— Statesman' 3-3-1984.

Christian concern . . . —(Contd. from p. 6)

Modern man has forgotten how to be patient—he has forgotten the joy of creativity—he wants what the advertising media tell him he needs, and he wants it now!

No longer is there any meaning in the saying 'Make hay while the sun shines.' Natural sources of energy subordinate Man to Nature's time schedule. But man does not want to be subordinated. What has the Church to say about this rat race?

This is not all nostalgic and retrogressive talk. It is a plea to stand back and look at life and its meaning. God has given us life to enjoy,—to glorify Him and His creation, to see the beauty around us and build it up rather than destroy it. But we tear through our lives with no time to look at those beauties around us, so busy earning more and more rupees that we have neither the leisure nor the

even the desire to sit back and enjoy human relationships, quietness within and around us and harmony with nature and its creator. We have forgotten how to distinguish between our wants and our needs.

In this context what is the Church doing to direct the thinking of its membership and to leaven the masses? What is she doing to re-assert the human and divine value of love, unselfishness, consideration for others and the ability to identify amid all the chaotic blare of advertisement, between what will contribute to the happiness of himself, his family and his community.

Centuries ago God looked out upon all that he had made and beheld it was very good. Today there are still areas of our earth where such a verdict might be valid. Where would He have to say about that portion of His earth, His garden, in which He has appointed us as gardeners?



"... WITH GOD, DOING JUSTICE, LOVING MERCY" (Micah 6:8)

ASIA SUNDAY is becoming significant as a concrete celebration of our solidarity as Asians and as Christians. In 1983, many Churches in each country of this region observed it. The specially prepared 'worship folders' were available in eleven languages, including English.

Asia Sunday falls every year on the Sunday before Pentecost because, on that day in 1959, the East Asia Christian Conference (EACC) was inaugurated. Today it is known as the CCA—Christian Conference of Asia. In CCA, 110 Churches and National Councils from 16 Asian countries, including Australia and New Zealand, are in fellowship with one another. Their conviction for themselves and for all other Asian Christians is 'that the purpose of God for the Church in Asia is life together in common obedience to Him for the doing of His will in the world'.

This year again, ALL Asian Christians are invited to acknowledge their togetherness in their Christian vocation 'to do justice, love, mercy and to walk humbly with God' (Micah 6:8).

Call to worship

L: The one who sits on the throne says,
'Behold I make all things new.'

P: *You are the first and the last,
the Beginning and the End.*

L: Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth.

P: *Now God's home is with us,
He will live with us,
and we shall be His people;
God Himself will be with us,
and He will be our God.*

Reflection in silence

L: 'What kind of a God do we have?'

'A very just God... a God who chastises our lack of faith, our vices, the little esteem in which we hold dignity... He is the God of Liberty... a God of mercy, of equity, who while He chastises us betters us...'

Silence

HYMN

Adoration (in unison)

O Lord, Our God,
Thou art the great God—He who is in heaven.
Thou art the creator of life; thou makest the regions above.
Thou art the hunter who hunts for souls.
Thou art the leader who goes before us.
Thou art the great mantle which covers us.
Thou art He whose hands are with wounds.
Thou art He whose blood is a living stream.
Thou art He whose blood was poured out for us.

Thanksgiving

L: O Lord, Our God, who fills your children with good things beyond measure and their deserving, give us grace at this time to remember the steadfastness of your love to us and to all people. Especially today, we come before you as Asians and as members of your Church in its many nations.

We thank you for our distinct history, for the vastness and variety of our heritages in art, culture, religion and philosophy. Help us thankfully to learn of the riches of Christ from them and through them.

We thank you for your Church in our midst, and for the work of all your servants in planting it and nurturing it as your promise of Life for all our people.

We thank you for the growing sense of oneness among the Churches of Asia, for their drawing together to confess and proclaim the Gospel of your Son, and to be His fellow workers in his work of proclaiming release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, and to preach the good news to the poor.

Above all, we thank you for the gift of yourself in your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ, and for your gift to us of faith in him...

Lord, you have given us so much. Give us one thing more: a grateful heart, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

HYMN

Confession

L: The Lord God points his finger and we ask, 'Is it I?'

Let us be honest with ourselves and with God; fall humbly before him and confess our sinfulness, and the sinfulness of our society; our participation in the sins of our world today. Let us pray in silence.

Today, especially do we confess our failures to do justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly with God.

(in unison)

Lord God almighty,
forgive your church
its wealth among the poor,
its fear among the unjust,
its cowardice among the oppressed;
forgive us, your children,
our lack of hope in your reign,
our lack of faith in your presence,
our lack of love in your mercy.

Restore us to your covenant
with your people ;
bring us to true repentance ;
teach us to accept the sacrifice
of Christ ;
make us strong with the comfort
of your Holy Spirit.

Break us where we are strong.
Make us where we are weak.
Shame us where we trust ourselves.
Name us where we have lost ourselves.
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

WORD FROM SCRIPTURE : MICAH 6:1,2,6-8
WORD IS INTERPRETED

HYMN

Intercession

L : Lord, we remember the millions in our world who must go hungry today, all those who do not have even the basic necessities of life, and for whom life itself has become a burden . . .

P : *Out of the depths we cry to you, Lord,
Hear our cry and listen to our prayer.*

L : Lord we remember all those who, because of their caste or class, colour or sex, are exploited and marginalized—the forces of oppression that trample on people and the unjust systems which break the spirit of people, and rob them of their rights and dignity.

P : *Out of the depths we cry to you, Lord.
Hear our cry and listen to our prayer.*

L : Lord we bring before you the churches and the Christian people in Asia and around the world. Often we have remained silent, passing by on the other side ; Often we have been indifferent ; Often we have been part of the forces that destroy life.

P : *Out of the depths we cry to you, Lord,
Hear our cry and listen to our prayer.*

L : Lord, we call to mind all authority that treats people as nobodies—
Military regimes and dictatorships ;
lonely prisons and unjust laws ;
the war industry and political greed.

P : *Out of the depths we cry to you, Lord,
Hear our cry and listen to our prayer.*

All: Lord, we affirm with hope your presence in the world. You see the wounded and the broken, and say—
'Those are my brothers and sisters.'

Lord inspire us with your love,
Challenge us with your truth.
Empower us with your strength.
To live for life in the midst of death. Amen.

Act of commitment

L : The Word of God for us challenges us to do justice and to love kindness.

Let us now offer to God our lives that we may become a part of him ; for only then can we truly fulfill his requirements. Let us bring before him our offerings—symbol of life surrendered.

OFFERING HYMN OR ANTHEM

Celebration and dedication

(in unison)

In the midst of hunger and war
we celebrate the promise of plenty and peace
In the midst of oppression and tyranny
we celebrate the promise of service and freedom.
In the midst of doubt and despair
we celebrate the promise of faith and hope,
In the midst of fear and betrayal
we celebrate the promise of joy and loyalty.
In the midst of hatred and death
we celebrate the promise of love and life.
In the midst of sin and decay
we celebrate the promise of salvation and renewal.
In the midst of death on every side
we celebrate the promise of the living Christ.

L : Father, we remember the life, death and resurrection of Christ—all that he was done for us. We pray that we will be one in offering our lives. Unite us with all churches who believe in your name. Remember our families, friends and also our country and people so that they will open their eyes to the truth. Most of all, we pray for the poor, the deprived and the oppressed.

God, open our hearts to the true love for your people. Let the redeeming love of your Son rule over our selfishness. Grant us the unity with our fellow human beings, especially and at all times with the needy.

Lord Almighty, you are praised and honoured, one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

BENEDICTION

Postlude or Exit Song

PRAYING FOR THE COUNTRIES OF ASIA

Australia & New Zealand : Pray for the unity of the Churches, for their work to make justice the basis for real reconciliation, peace and unity in their societies. Remember the Aborigines and the Maoris as they seek and shoulder responsibilities of honourable participation in their nations.

Bangladesh : One of the 'least developed countries'. Pray for its struggle for democracy, political stability and a better life for its poor masses. Pray for the healing of the divisions in the Churches.

Burma : Pray that the Burmese way to Socialism might lead to the unity and development of the nation ; and that the Church might persevere in its witness and service.

China : Pray for all efforts to achieve development without disparity ; for the greater recognition of the place of religious faith in the life of the nation. Pray that China will contribute to peace in Asia, that the Chinese churches might achieve even deeper unity and be kept faithful to Jesus Christ in their witness and service.

Hong Kong : Remember the people of Hong Kong who face uncertainty and speculation about what 1997 might mean to them. May the churches be a source of hope to the larger community, knowing that under all circumstances people can know, love and obey God.

India : Pray for the restoration of peace and mutual trust among the people in Punjab and Assam ; for the struggles of the dalits ; and that the Churches might serve all for the glory of Christ, in unity with one another.

Indonesia : Pray that *Pancasila* might provide the government and the people a basis for development which fosters unity, justice and human rights for all people. Remember the Churches as they move towards greater unity.

Japan : Pray that Japan might be responsible, especially towards her Asian neighbours, in using its industrial strength, that it might be a power for peace and resist the push towards greater militarisation. Remember the discriminated minorities in Japanese society and pray for the work of Churches to secure justice for them.

Korea : Let us join our prayers to those of Korean Christians for peace, unification, human rights and democracy in national life. May the great growth of the Church help in upholding these concerns. Let us remember the celebrations of the 200th anniversary of the Roman Church and the 100th anniversary of the Protestant Churches.

Laos, Kampuchea, Vietnam : Pray that all causes of violence may be removed from these countries so that they may mend their shattered societies in peace and with good-will from all.

Malaysia : Pray that freedom, equality, justice and dignity might be ensured for all in the plans for the nation, and that the Churches might be strong and united in furthering these values of the Gospel in national life.

Pakistan : Pray for the restoration of democracy and civil liberties, and that the Churches might be bold in upholding these values.

Philippines : Remember the struggles of the people for democracy, justice and human rights. Pray for unity and reconciliation in national life. Pray that the Churches might steadfastly stand by the poor and oppressed.

Sri Lanka : Pray for the healing of ethnic animosities and for a just arrangement that will establish peace, trust and justice among all sections. May the Churches serve the situation in humility and with courage.

Singapore : Pray that the mystery and sacredness of the human be acknowledged in the midst of all its achievements. May the growth of the Church serve to strengthen the finer qualities of life in the nation.

Taiwan : May the Government be given the wisdom and vision to respond to the people's desire for their integrity and for democracy in their state. May not the misery of its people be the price of its economic successes. Let us pray that the Churches might make these their concern. Praise God especially for the witness of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan in these matters.

Thailand : Pray for greater participation of the people in national affairs so that resources are more equitably shared, that areas of poverty and human debasement might be no more. May the Churches be channels of the love and concern of Jesus to their people.

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1984-1985/000

The Tears of the Poor Challenge Divine Justice

IF THE WORLD WAS A VILLAGE

If the world was a village of 1000 people, there would be 60 North Americans, 80 South Americans, 210 Europeans, 564 Asians.

If the world was a village of 1000 people, there would be 300 Christians.

If the world was a village of 1000 people, 60 people would own half of the total income, 500 would go hungry to bed, 600 would live in the slums, 700 would be illiterate !

If this be our village we should surely try to change this. But it is, in fact our village, since it is our world !

Probably the darkest cloud on the world horizon is hunger.

Researchers and FAO agree that around 1 billion people suffer from lack of food ; 400 million are at the edge of starvation...every day more than 12,000 people die of starvation.

By some estimates, nearly two thirds of the 2.2 billion people living in Asia appeared to be consuming less than an adequate amount in 1980, and nearly half appeared to fall below 90 per cent of the daily caloric requirement (2200-2400).

At the heart of the food problem is the unjust distribution of cropland...

Equitable access to land is clearly a moral and religious issue and a central part of our Judeo-Christian heritage. Sufficient food can be produced. The tragedy of world hunger exists largely because many are too poor to buy food, or because the system denies them access to land.

UNICEF's annual *State of the World's Children* message reports that 17 million children under five died in 1981, and 1982 was not expected to be better. Only \$ 100 a piece would have provided the health and nutritional care to have saved them. That amounts to less than one per cent of the US military budget.

World military expenditures now equal the annual income of half of the world's people—the poorest half.

45 of the world's 164 nations are involved in conflicts. More than four million soldiers are directly engaged in combat. The US has shipped military equipment to all but two of the nations now at war and is a major arms supplier to 20 of these nations. The Soviet Union supplies military aid to 13 countries.

National and global development patterns leave hundreds of millions of people with no chance to earn a living in a sustainable manner. The economic policies of many developing countries have long favoured city over countryside, industry over agriculture, and, within the agricultural sector, large farms and plantations over peasant subsistence farms.

Moreover, in some societies, the benefits from economic growth flow to and are retained by a relatively small number of people, limiting the resources available to finance programmes that would meet the basic needs of the majority. Some redistribution of resources among and within countries is, therefore, possible, even if politically difficult.

Nuclear weapons epitomize the pervasive violence in our society :—a violence stemming from the fear of rich and powerful nations about losing what they have arrogated to themselves. This violence reaches its ultimate in the Third World through both exploitation and deprivation of needs.

It seems inconceivable that a child's life is worth less than \$ 100 in our village, in our World

JUSTICE?

MERCY?

PEACE?



MADHYA KERALA

Dedication Ceremony



From Left : Bishop M.C. Mani (C.S.I.), Paulose Mar Peelaxinos (*Metropolitan Orthodox Syrian Church*), Mar Athanasius (*Saffragan Metropolitan of Mar Thoma Church*), Bishop Kuriakose Kunnasserry (*Roman Catholic Church*), Arch Bishop Benedict Mar Gregorios (*Roman Catholic Church*), Abraham Mar Clemis (*Metropolitan, Knanaya Jacobate Church*), Mathews Mar Coorilos (*Catholicos designate*), Bishop Joseph Powethil (*Roman Catholic Church*) and Bishop T.S. Joseph (C.S.I.).

Ecumenical Church at Nilackal

At an ecumenical service jointly conducted for the first time in the history of Christianity in India by Heads of five major Christian denominations, St. Thomas Church at Nilackal was dedicated on Sunday the 8th April, 1984. The ceremony which was officiated by eight Bishops including the Rt. Rev. M.C. Mani of the Madhya Kerala Diocese of the Church of South India, was attended by thousands of Christians across Kerala. Inaugurating the public meeting that followed Kerala Governor P. Ramachandran said that Kerala had once again set an example to communal harmony and tolerance. Presiding the meeting, Chief Minister K. Karunakaran pointed out that the real struggle was between those who believed in God and those who do not believe and there should not be any struggle among believers. Head of Ramakrishna Mission Swami Golokananda said that the Church was an example as how fraternity and unity could be cultivated among different communities. Ministers R. Balakrishna Pillai, P.J. Joseph, K.M. Mani and T.M. Jacob also spoke on the occasion.

The tradition of Kerala Christians is that in A.D. 52 St. Thomas the Apostle, in the course of his missionary adventures landed in Crangannore, a famous ancient port on the coast of Malabar. He visited several places preaching the Gospel of His Master and gained many adherents even from the Brahmins. The church was founded in as many as seven places and clergy were ordained. Nilackal is one of the seven places where a church

is believed to have been founded. On the foot-hills of the Sahyas (western ghats) this place was a prominent commercial centre connecting Tamil Nadu and the Malabar coast. The Christian community founded by St. Thomas continued to flourish till 13th century but attacks of wild animals and decoits from neighbouring regions made the people leave the place and migrate to several of the present Christian dominated areas in Kerala. Remnants of houses, tombs, churches and wells found in this place and old records kept in some of the families are proof of this.

In 1983 when devotees put up a temporary shed for worship at Nilackal, some Hindu organisations objected to it because it was on the way to the hill shrine Sabarimalai. The Government allotted land in the estate belonging to the State owned farming corporation for construction of a church. It led to a state-wide agitation with Hindu organisation maintaining that they would not allow the church within the poonkavanam (flower garden) of Lord Ayyappa, the presiding diety of Sabarimalai. There was communal disharmony in many places in the State. The Christian leaders now took a stand that they would not build the church wounding the feelings of their Hindu brethren. This stand of the Christians helped to solve the problem by selecting a place acceptable to both the communities. Thus the long cherished desire of the Kerala Christians to have a place of worship at Nilackal has come true. The plan is to set up a larger church and an Ecumenical Centre at Nilackal.

PROF. T.P. MATHEW

A Seminar on social development was conducted at the Church of South India Retreat Centre, Shoranur. This Seminar was sponsored by Coady International Institute, Canada.



Rt. Rev. K.C. Seth seen delivering Presidential address.

Mr. Eric Amit, Asst. Director Coady International Institute, Canada ; Mr. K.K. Appukuttan, District Social Welfare Officer ; Hon'ble Minister, Sri C.M. Sundaram, Minister for Local Administration, Kerala, Mr. P. P. Krishnan, Municipal Chairman, Shoranur took part in the seminar.

MR. JOHN CHACKO, *Shoranur.*

Arms and Global Poverty

One of the baffling phenomena of the modern world is that it is over armed and undernourished. Every minute 30 children die for want of food and vaccine and every minute the world's military budget consumes 1,30,00,000 rupees of public money. These shocking disclosures, made in a survey by a Washington research group, should awaken world leaders to the need to do something to curb the spiralling arms-race and divert the funds so saved for socially useful purposes. In the past few years, the production and sale of arms by the industrially advanced nations have increased considerably. Many poor countries

of the Third World get from the so called big powers more arms than the much needed economic assistance. More and more regions of the world are being militarised on one pretext or another. A dictator in trouble gets arms just for the asking, but a nation afflicted with poverty finds the world unresponsive to its pleas for economic aid. This tragedy is directly attributed to the confrontational politics of the two super powers. It is time world leaders made a serious effort to rectify the calamitous distortion in world priorities.

THE OTHER SIDE OF 1984

Author : BISHOP LESSLIE NEWBIGIN

The Other Side of 1984: Questions for the Churches.
By Lesslie Newbigin, WCC Risk Book Series 1983.

Bishop Lesslie Newbigin in his provocative book, *The Other Side of 1984*, has given a sobering analysis of the situation of the Church, culture, and the future. He sees, especially in the western societies, the disintegration of values, the loss of confidence and the prospect of nuclear destruction. Scepticism is prevalent, and hopes are shattered. The Christian religion has removed itself from the public sector to the privatization of faith.

He observes that the vision of gradual progress has faded and the promise of earthly utopia to be achieved by violent revolution is pursued by a small minority. The majority find meaninglessness all around and have ceased to think hopefully about the earthly future. What does the Christian faith tell us of the future?

Bishop Newbigin calls for a faith or 'fiduciary framework'. What is the faith which begins our exploration and questionings? For the Christian, it is to follow the way of Jesus—his life, death and resurrection. The goal is not an earthly utopia brought about by people's efforts alone. It is the heavenly city which is God's creation and God's gift. In discipleship, we are concerned both with private and public faith, and to announce the reign of God and to create signs of the kingdom.

The Christian faith framework, especially in Asia, has to content with other faith frameworks. They too are intimately related to the life and future of the people. The different faith frameworks will be seriously challenged by each other when we enter into true dialogue, with an openness for change in our fundamental beliefs. Meanwhile, our Christian discipleship and our response to the future can only be tentative, as we seek to appropriate what God has revealed in other cultures and faith traditions. It is when we discern what God has done in history in the past, and the work of God's spirit in the whole created world, that we have that fiduciary framework to understand the present, and to raise the signs of the new future which God will bring about in the fullness of time.

The Situation

The era of Enlightenment, which lasted for 250 years, during which science and technology held the promise of unlimited progress, is ended and, at present, both of these are seen as threats of life than 'as ground for hope'. In that era, instead of the joys of heaven to which the medieval people were encouraged to look forward, happiness here on earth was offered to the Enlightenment people.

However, people are once again at a point when accepted 'explanations' no longer explain, and the liberation of the rational faculties from the control of 'dogma' has

not led them into a world which is 'meaningful'. With a dramatic suddenness, in the space of one life time, Western civilization has completely lost confidence in its own validity.

The Challenge

Bishop Newbigin is not one to be disheartened by this situation. Augustine offered a 'post critical philosophy', that is, 'the revelation of God in Jesus Christ' as the new framework for understanding at a time when another 'uniquely brilliant culture' had come to an end and 'had lost the power to renew itself'. Similarly, the Bishop, an experienced and tenacious warrior in Mission has invited the church 'to be held in offering to the men and women of our culture a way of understanding . . . which is based unashamedly on the revelation of God made in Jesus Christ and attested in scripture and the tradition of the Church, and which is offered as a fresh starting point for the exploration of the mystery of human existence and for coping with its practical tasks not only in the private and domestic life of the believers but also in the public life of the citizens' (p. 27).

Bishop Newbigin has called for 'a genuinely missionary encounter between a Scriptural Faith and modern culture' and 'to hold up the modern world to the mirror of the Bible in order to understand'. Although the study material and the questions are meant for 'British discussion', the issues of faith in Jesus Christ, its relevance to the world of today and its communication, are subjects deserving discussion in all the countries. One should be reminded that, in a sense, the issues of today can never be articulated or discussed in isolation by churches in one country alone.

Old Baggage to go

One wonders whether Bishop Newbigin, in his enthusiasm has taken seriously enough the sociological realities of life in Britain and in Europe.

(a) The Church, as the Establishment and a Constantinian hangover, still has power and prestige and a visible presence in Britain. Not only is it the legal standing that is important. Need one say much about its movable and the 'image' the Church has created among the people. Therefore, it is not a question of the Church falling a new into the 'Constantinian trap' but of extricating itself from it before challenging modern culture.

(b) Christianity is the folk religion in Britain and Western Europe. Even those who do not attend churches, consider themselves as Christians. A number of people in some countries still contribute to churches through taxes. Should not the priority be how to make Christianity a 'Faith religion' instead of being a 'Folk religion' before confronting the world at large?

(c) One of the consequences of the Enlightenment was the various options that became available and the different ideologies and isms which began to claim the allegiance

of men and women. In the book the existence of many 'fiduciary frameworks' have been recognised by the Bishop (p. 30). This new fact of life is significant enough for the people not to accept the claim of one 'Faith' as providing the fiduciary framework. The churches are to be invited first to accept the new situation and then to begin to find ways of presenting the Christian Faith as an option.

The Church is too powerful

The Bishop gives an impression of having taken Constantine rather lightly, and even of justifying the actions of the Church. It is not the act of his conversion that is questionable. It is the aftermath and the consequences of his conversion which overwhelmed the Church. These are the crucial factors. Over the last 1500 years or so, there have been consistent efforts for the Church to seek after and preserve the Constantinian model. Even where the churches are in a minority, they follow that model, namely, to serve through powerful institutions and structures. All the missions of dollars that have gone into new institutions have only helped to bolster up their power and prestige.

As the Bishop has reminded his readers, before Constantine, 'the Church's only weapons were the word of testimony and the faithfulness of martyrs.' Is that at all possible in today's world? In other worlds, how can we proclaim or confront modern culture from powerless situations, with nothing except Faith in Jesus Christ? The question for the Church in every country is how to become powerless, and then how to witness from powerless positions.

Hanging together...

What are the priorities for the Church? Disunity and division are rampant in the nations of the world, and pronouncedly so in the countries of the so-called Third World! How does the Church affirm the common humanity of all people and promote unity in this situation? Accepting that Justice and Peace are ultimately the gifts of God, how does the Church participate, along with others in promoting them? Basically, the Bishop has called for presentation to and dialogue with modern culture, whereas, the first place to start seriously is with the people of other Faiths. Is it not necessary to find commonality and mutual concerns among people of all religious Faiths? After all, people of 'Modern Culture' do belong to different Faith, and all the faiths have genuine 'human concerns' in one way or another.

New answers needed

Bishop Newbigin has suggested for exploration five areas 'where a resolute challenge to the assumptions of our culture is called for'. They are: (i) What it means to be a human person; (ii) the goal of human life; (iii) the capabilities and rights of governments; (iv) our vision of the future; and (v) contemporary assumptions about what is involved in knowing. All these could be undertaken together with members of all Faiths, and certainly so in Asian and African Churches.

According to the Bishop, the governing principle of true humanity is 'not equality but mutuality' (p. 56). Does not the Biblical view, both in the Old Testament and the Pauline writings, affirm both equality and dependence? The defenders of 'class' in the West and 'caste' in India would agree to affirm 'mutuality' without accepting 'equality' similarly, in the discussion of the third area he seems to prefer 'mutual responsibilities' rather than 'equal rights.' One would have thought that a Christian has to affirm both, as, in any case, if 'equal rights' is a gift from God, it is a free gift for all.

Lessons from the past

It is interesting to observe that at the Enlightenment, at the very time when Nature and the Scientist replaced God and the Priest, and the Churches retreated to their private worlds in their Home Base, the Western Churches were at their Zenith in their missionary endeavours in their colonies! In addition to that, being part of the European culture, they joined in 'dominating and often destroying more ancient cultures.' After opting out of the Public World at home, was it an easy way out or a God gave mission to go to other countries to proclaim the Faith? They passed on to the newly founded churches the same theology which they had chosen for themselves. Thus, the problem faced by the churches in all the countries is same in that sense, namely, Christian Faith in the Public World. It should be a cause for real concern for churches, particularly in Asia and Africa, if there was even a hint that Christian Dogma should now be given the primacy and be the governing principle of Public Life. That is exactly what some of the Buddhist, Islamic and Hindu clergy want in countries where people of their Faiths are predominant in numbers. In spite of all his patient and sincere efforts to explain, in the end the writer seems to indicate that the final solution to the crisis of our times lies in the primacy of, and in putting to the test, Christian Dogma as the 'fiduciary framework'.

Not dogma but dialogue

Bishop Newbigin sets an almost impossible task when he calls for 'a truly missionary approach' which 'would recognize frankly the fact that the Christian Dogma offers a 'fiduciary framework' quite different from, and (in some respects) incompatible with, the framework within which modern European culture has developed; and would be quite bold and uncompromising in setting forth the Christian 'Dogma', but also very humble and teachable in engaging in dialogue with those who live by other fundamental beliefs. Unfortunately, Church history does not bear this out. The Christians who are 'very humble and teachable in engaging in dialogue' continue to be infinitesimal in number!

The Other Side of 1984 is a timely and stimulating book meant for Christians, written by a committed Christian to promote study and to challenge them to be true to their Faith in relation to the 'Public World'.

Reviewed by REV. ALEXANDER D. JOHN
from C.C.A.N.



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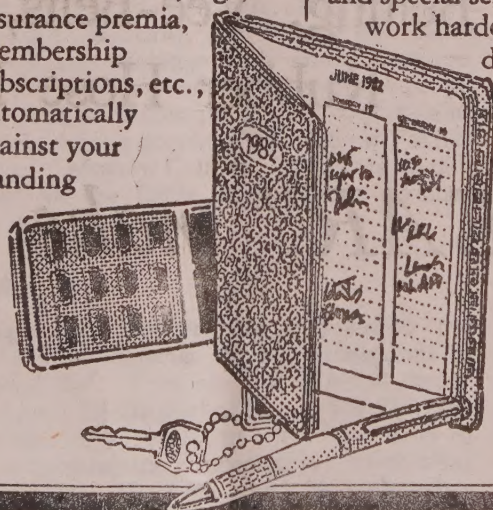
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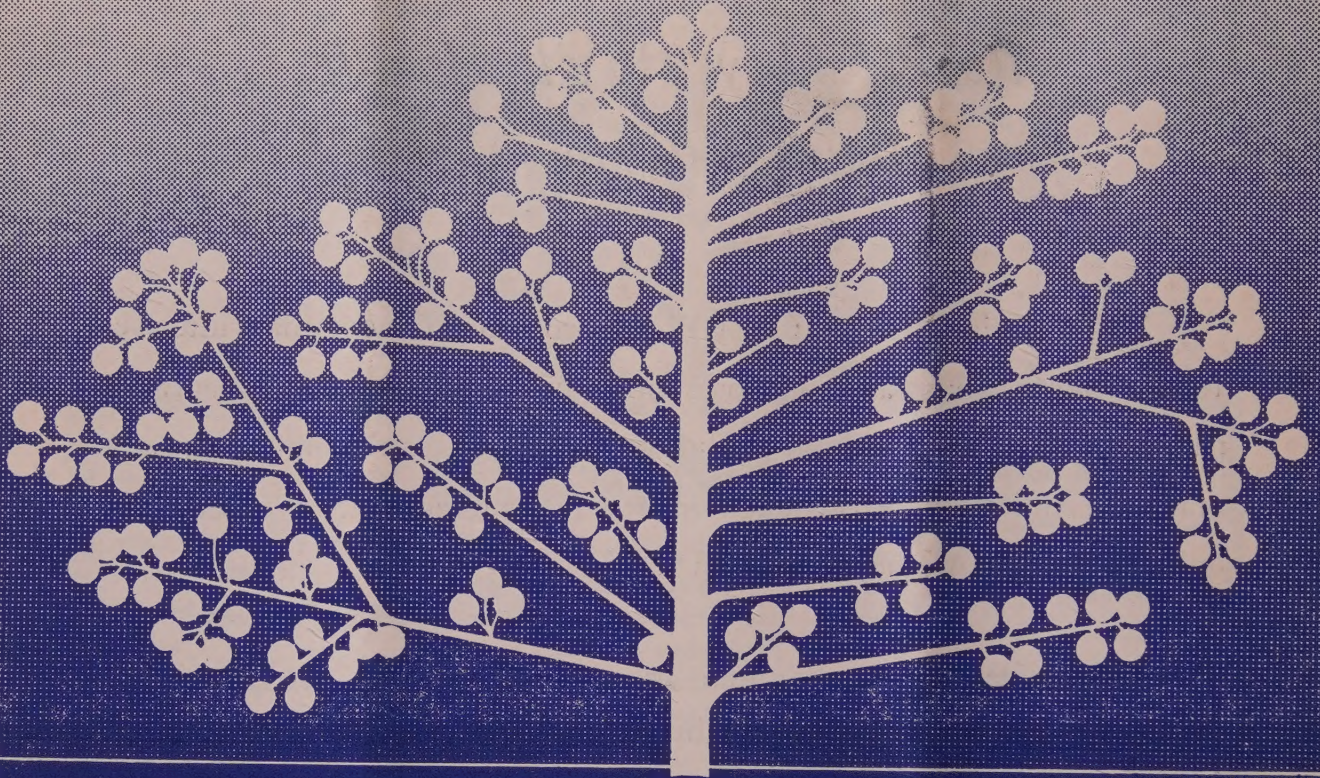
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